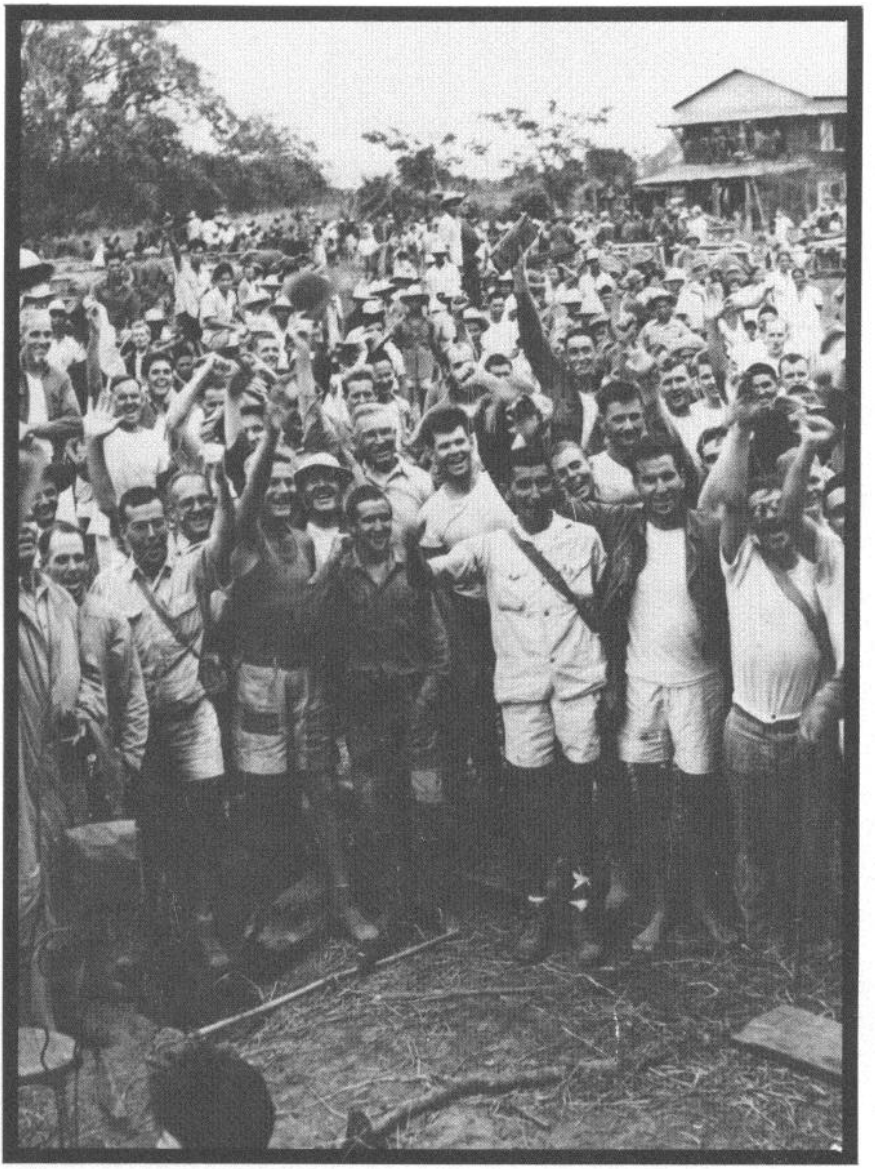
THE

REGISTER

OF THE KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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COVER: American POWs cheer after their liberation from Cabanatuan in 1945. Harrodsburg tankers William H. Gentry, Charles R. Quinn, Field M. Reed, Jr., and Garret G. Royalty were among the Cabanatuan prisoners freed from the Japanese in this dramatic operation by U.S. Rangers and Filipino guerrillas. Courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps.

The Harrodsburg Tankers: Bataan, Prison, and the Bonds of Community

by James Russell Harris

In November 1940, sixty-six young men from Harrodsburg, Kentucky, began an odyssey which took them to combat on Bataan, Japanese prison camp, and the darker regions of the soul. As boys, many of the sixty-six had grown up together. As young adults, they had joined the Kentucky National Guard's 38th Tank Company. When the nation prepared for a world war, they became part of the regular army and trained together. None of them could have known their fate would include one of the most desperate campaigns in military history and painful years of imprisonment which suggest the tortures of the damned.

Sustaining them through the ordeal were significant assets: homegrown toughness, resilience, and interdependence. Other advantages, such as the bonds of community, at times were submerged by the war's flood of events. Nevertheless, these strong social ties repeatedly surfaced. Many times only chance or an individual's resources of character could save a life. But when the Harrodsburg men could help each other, they did so with food, clothing, medicine, and emotional support. Certainly, the Harrodsburg connection was not the only, or even the dominant, factor in their lives as tankers or POWs. This hometown bond between them, however, was a significant aid to them in situations which required all the inner strength they could muster. In their limitations as abandoned soldiers and prisoners of war lies their tragedy. In their stubborn survival lies their victory.

Fortunately, the story of this journey through hell has been preserved by extensive interviews. Testimonies obtained in 1961 by the Kentucky National Guard (tapes and transcripts of which are in the Kentucky Military History Museum) and 1985-88 inter-

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Mr. Harris serves as an assistant editor of publications at the Kentucky Historical Society. A briefer version of this article was read at the Eastern Kentucky University Symposium on Kentucky in the 1940s, held at Richmond, Kentucky, on February 28, 1987. The author acknowledges, with gratitude, the research assistance of Col. Arthur L. Kelly and the staff of the Veterans of World War II Oral History Project, University of Kentucky Library.

views by the University of Kentucky's Veterans of World War II Oral History Project record with rare starkness and immediacy the elements of cruelty, courage, and survival.

The setting for this terrible examination- of human potentials was the Philippine Islands. There the Harrodsburg men joined a military establishment struggling to prepare for war with Japan. By mid-1941, General Douglas MacArthur, recently made commander of United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), had begun to rush massive shipments of military personnel and supplies to the islands. A part of that reinforcement, the Kentuckians' battalion and another national guard tank battalion were intended to form the nucleus of an armored division. This larger unit was to be assembled before April 1942, the target date for completion of war preparations. The Japanese, however, struck several months earlier than expected. Rather than the date when MacArthur's forces reached their maximum strength, April 1942 eventually became the time of the surrender of thousands, and the retreat of MacArthur and a portion of his force to a doomed island-fortress.

After months of bitter fighting on Bataan Peninsula, the Americans and Filipinos surrendered. Those who did not escape to the nearby island of Corregidor had to make the infamous Death March to prisons outside of Bataan. About a month later Corregidor surrendered. For years afterward American prisoners endured terrible conditions in prison.

Most of the fifteen transcribed 1961 interviews (eight hours of tape recordings) and the ten taped 1985-88 interviews (forty-seven hours) discuss the same events. Therefore, the collections form a chronological narrative. As a whole these interviews address a paradox of war. In the most bestial conditions man can create, an essential but often overlooked, starved, beaten,

'Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C., 1953), is the best survey of the campaign. This volume of the U.S. Army's official history of the Second World War emphasizes meticulous research, mammoth scope, and a commendably dispassionate approach. Less scholarly is John Toland, *But Not In Shame: The Six Months After Pearl Harbor (New* York, 1961). On MacArthur's performance see Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences (New* York, 1964), Gavin Long, *MacArthur As Military Commander* (Princeton, 1969), and D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur,* 3 ~01s. (Boston, 1970, 1975, 1985). An articulate memoir by a campaign participant is Carlos Romulo, *I Saw the Fall of the Philippines* (Garden City, N.Y., 1943).

shot, and buried part of humanity can survive in war and even surpass time. After Bataan the Harrodsburg men relied on their innate qualities and continued to fight — not with conventional weapons, but with courage, faith, and the bonds of community.

I

The long journey of the sixty-six began in ordinary circumstances. In the Depression-blighted 1930s, young Kentuckians like Morgan French saw National Guard duty as a way to have "a little extra money" and adventure. The Guard's 38th Tank Company, organized in the early thirties, provided these attractions to the youth of Harrodsburg. In rather primitive surroundings the soldiers at first trained in World War I-era Renault light tanks and later on two "Mae West" tanks (M2T2), which boasted twin turrets each mounting a .30 caliber machine gun.2

The unit's "armory" consisted of several rooms above a restaurant. Although the men drilled at night, even a lighted area for outdoor training was unavailable. The tanks themselves sometimes were housed three blocks away. On other occasions the tanks, when not in use, remained on farms of unit members (a driver could receive pay for the time required to drive a tank to and from town). The unit's composition also reflected small-town Kentucky. Several sets of brothers and relatives served in the company. Through these and other associations, the guardsmen had many ties to Harrodsburg's population of about four thousand.3

Despite such factors which possibly could hinder performance, the 38th operated efficiently. Annual federal inspections at Ft. Knox were always passed successfully. The unit was called

2Morgan French interview, 25 July 1985, Veterans of World War II Oral History Project, University of Kentucky Library (hereafter UK); John L. Keller, "The History of the 38th Tank Company of Harrodsburg, Kentucky," 3-4, William H. Gentry Papers (copy in author's possession); Col. E. A. Fry, U.S. War Department, Office of the Army of Militia Board to Adjutant General of Kentucky, 24 June 1932, 38th Tank Company History Folder, Kentucky National Guard Boone Center, Frankfort, Ky. (hereafter Boone Center); William H. Gentry Memoir of World War II, Gentry Papers.

3Gentry Memoir; Walter Page, "Forty Years Ago in Hell," ***Kentucky*** Monthly (April 1981), 33; Roster of Troops, 38th Tank Company History Folder, Boone Center; E. Eastman Irvine, ed., ***The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1940 (New*** York, 1940), 492.

Kentucky Military History Museum

Considerable informality accompanied the 38th Tank Company's duty at a 1939 coal strike in Harlan County. Members shown *(l. to r.): First row* — Donald Noel, Leslie Pearson, Everett Preston, Maurice "Jack" Wilson. *Second row* — Owen Darland, Virgil Elliott, Edwin Elliott, Dillard Payne, Sam E. Rowland, Guy Terhune. *Third row* — Wiiiam Lawson, James Comingo, James Pinkston, unidentified, James Terhune. *Fourth row* — Horace Hourigan.

on not only for relatively frivolous duties like parades and security at the Kentucky Derby, but also for real emergencies: a Harlan County coal strike and 1937's great flood.4 In this natural disaster, three officers and thirty-five men guarded prisoners evacuated from the state prison in Frankfort. Several days on a rain-drenched field overlooking the city were not pleasant. Cold, inadequate food service and the uncertainty of corraling prisoners made the contingent's flood duty miserable but memorable. Eventually, the guardsmen helped move the prisoners to other jails, but some unit members remained on prison duty until June. Others of the 38th found much briefer, if not any more pleasant, the quarantine duty in Louisville.5

'***Historical Annual, National Guard of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1938*** (n.p., n.d.), 55,215; Gentry Memoir; French interview, UK; William H. Gentry interview, 31 July 1985, UK.

'Carl E. Kramer, ***Capital on the Kentucky: A Two Hundred Year History of Frankfort and Franklin County*** (Frankfort, KY., 1986), 339; Gentry interview, UK; French interview, UK.

But the requirements of national security soon overshadowed such Kentucky disruptions. In November 1940, the Harrodsburg men, newly designated as Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion, went to Ft. Knox and trained for service in the national army[6] Although the young guardsmen at first felt intimidated by their new surroundings, the company's true abilities soon emerged. Thirty-mile marches and convoys (called "dust endurance contests" by a battalion officer), scrounging for parts, and cross-training of each officer on all unit weapons quickly became routine. While at Ft. Knox, many of Company D also attended specialty schools (maintenance, cook/baker, etc.) to polish their skills even more. Some were transferred to the battalion's headquarters company when it was formed. The guardsmen and the draftees who filled out the company roster made good use of their past experiences. Many of the company had operated and maintained farm equipment and heavy vehicles like bulldozers. Maintaining and operating tanks, half-tracks, trucks, jeeps, and motorcycles proved challenging but not alien experiences. More important, the troubled lot of agriculture in the 1930s had helped prepare these former farmers emotionally for the disruptions and miseries ahead. [7]

Perhaps the most valuable qualities Company D showed during training were cohesion and cooperation. These attributes necessary for effective teamwork developed without formal training; the natural evolution of such characteristics sprang from the soldiers' shared origins and experiences. Indeed, most of the Harrodsburg men had grown up together. Almost all were acquaintances of long standing. Consequently, individuals had strong ties to the group. The French brothers even refused the opportunity

[6]Maj. Gen. A. V. Winston, Office of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, to the Adjutant General of Kentucky, 26 August 1940, 38th Tank Company History Folder, Boone Center; Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, to Keen Johnson, 20 November 1940, in "The Provisional Tank Group, United States Army Forces in the Far East," n.p.; Maj. Gen. Bruce Jacobs, "The Evolution of Tank Units in the Pre-WW II National Guard and the Defense of Bataan," *The Military Collector and Historian 38* (1986): 125; Col. W. D. McGlasson, "Mobilization, 1940: The Big One," *National Guard* (September 1980), 10-21.

7Gentry interview, UK; Roster of Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion, Gentry Papers; Alvin C. Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting 192nd Light G.H.Q. Tank Battalion: A Saga* ***of*** *Kentucky's Part in the Defense* ***of*** *the Philippines* (Newport, Ky., 4-5, 15; French interview, UK.

The Harrodsburg men **quickly adjusted to life at Ft. Knox, 1940-41. Company D members shown** *(l. to r.): First row* **— Willard Freeman, Yandell Terhune, Joseph Million, Charles Reed, Marcus A. Lawson, Ben Devine, William D. Sparrow, Arch Rue, Kenneth Hourigan. Second** *row* **— first three unidentified, Everett Preston, next two unidentified, Horace Hourigan, Maurice "Jack" Wilson. Courtesy of Morgan French.**

to remain at Ft. Knox as instructors. They preferred to go with their companions in Company D.8

Throughout its training, the unit retained a close-knit, almost clannish, quality. As a result, small-town relationships tended to endure even in the structured social system of the army. For example, Harrodsburg's 2nd Lt. William H. Gentry and a regular army officer lunched together. When a private from Harrodsburg joined them, the officer, unfamiliar with Company D, upbraided Gentry for allowing an enlisted man to dine with his superiors. In emphatic terms Gentry then informed this guardian of etiquette and privilege that the private had been a companion since childhood and that Gentry would not let army rules infringe on this valued hometown friendship.

The hometown bond between the Harrodsburg men also took potentially troublesome forms, such as a monopoly on promotions. All officers and senior noncoms were from Harrodsburg.

*French interview, UK.

Yet Company D functioned well. In September 1941, the unit proved its merit in the army-wide maneuvers at Camp Polk, Louisiana.' More pointed was the remark Maj. Gen. George S. Patton reportedly made when he evaluated all armored units in the maneuvers. After observing Company D on field exercises, Patton said, based on his recent experience, the only sure way to get a tank unit to operate smoothly was to have them all come from the same hometown. Whether Patton's remark really applies to all tank units, the general did certify Company D as combat-ready and recommended overseas duty for them.10 Some of the old 38th Tank Company were disqualified for foreign service because of age, health, or other reasons. After the winnowing process, sixty-six from Harrodsburg's National Guard unit awaited the great "adventure."

Before traveling to San Francisco, with each contingent on a different train for secrecy, members of the 192nd deciphered without authorization the army code PLUM (Philippines, Luzon, Manila) and learned their ultimate destination. After a brief stay in San Francisco for medical and equipment processing, the unit shipped out on October 27, 1941 .11 Passing the island on which Alcatraz prison was located, someone (not a Harrodsburg tanker) reportedly remarked, "I'd rather be here than where you all are going." Unaware of the ominous statement's prophetic quality, the tankers responded with derisive laughter.12 In the context of the next four years, remembrance of this incident probably made the laughter seem hollow indeed.

II

Company D's battalion arrived in Manila on November 20,

9Gentry interview, UK; Elmer J. Bensing interview, 24 June 1985, UK.

"Gentry interview, UK; Grover C. Brummett interview, 10 July 1985, UK; Edwin W. Rue interview, 24 March 1961, Kentucky National Guard Oral History Project, l-2 (hereafter NG); Kent Roberts Greenfield et al., ***The Organization of Ground Combat Troops,*** United States Army in World War II (Washington, D.C., 1949), 43-46, 43n. The reports on the armored units' performance in the Louisiana maneuvers cannot be located. DeWilda M. Williams, Military Archives Division, National Archives, to author, 8 July 1987.

"William H. Gentry interview, 10 June 1961, NG, 4; Poweleit, ***Kentucky's Fighting 192nd,*** 17, 19; Roster of Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion, October-November, 1941 (copy), National Personnel Records Center, St, Louis, Missouri.

'*Cecil Vandiver interview, 17 March 1961, NG, 1.

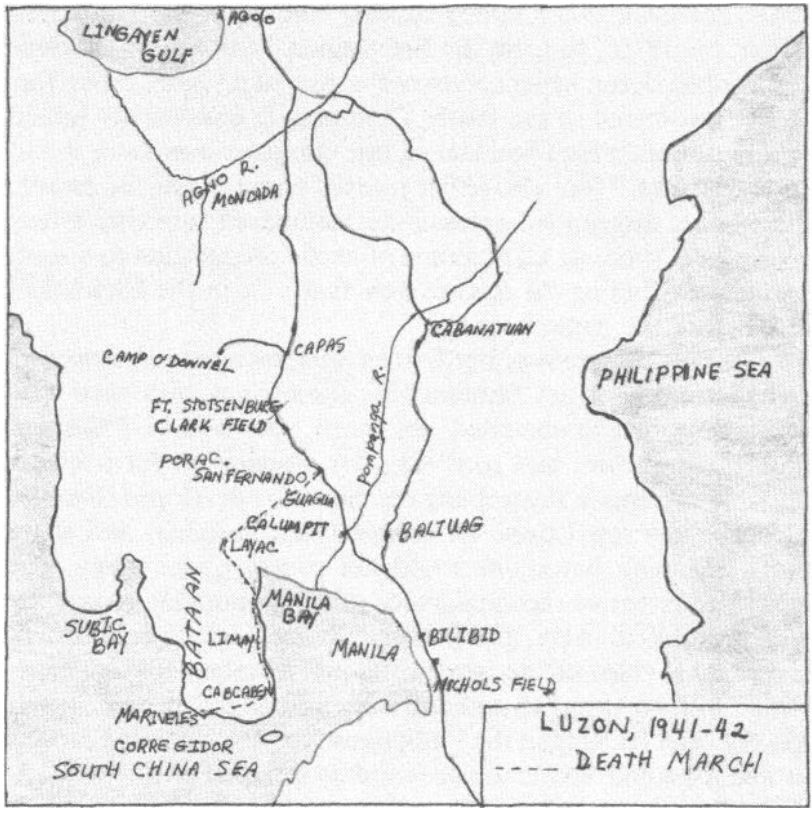
1941. There the 192nd joined another National Guard tank battalion, the 194th, to form the Provisional Tank Group, nucleus of a proposed, but never completed, armored division. Never formally transferred to the 194th, Company D unofficially joined that battalion, which had lacked one company ever since it had gone overseas.[13] Not altogether pleased with the reinforcement, the 194th's disgruntled commander compared receiving a new company (Company D) at a time of hectic preparation to a football team's finding "a strange new face . . . in the backfield" just before the game began.

At Fort Stotsenburg north of Manila, members of Company D had routine duties familiarizing themselves with their new equipment, which included seventeen new M-3Al "General Stuart" tanks they had received after designation for overseas duty.[14] Problems in the training regimen soon developed. Because of peacetime restrictions on ammunition, gasoline, and spare parts, the tank battalions could not practice adequately. For example, extensive reconnaissance of the unfamiliar geography was prohibited. Also, the personnel's lack of experience was severe. One-third of the two battalions' members had no experience with any kind of tank; all were unused to the new Stuart. Yet the brief training in the Philippines had less troubling aspects as well. By some reports this prewar duty included work-free afternoons (plus Wednesdays off) and housework done by Filipinos.[15]

[13] "Committee 9, "Armor on Luzon; Comparison of Employment of Armored Units in the 1941-42 and 1944-45 Luzon Campaigns," Advanced Officers Course, The Armor School (Ft. Knox, Kentucky, 1950), 18; John Slonaker, U.S. Army Military History Institute, to author, 19 October 1984; Operations Report of the Provisional Tank Group, U.S. Army Forces in the Far East (copy), National Archives, 2 (hereafter Op. Report); William H. Gentry to Col. Arthur L. Kelly, 12 May 1988, Gentry Papers.

[14] Ernest B. Miller, ***Bataan Uncensored*** (Brainerd, Minn., 1949), 58; Gentry interview, NG, 5, 7; Maurice "Jack" Wilson interview, 15 March 1961, NG, 1. The M-3Al General Stuart light tank was far superior to the type Company D had used in training. Weighing 14.3 tons (combat loaded), the M-3Al was very effective against enemy infantry's light weapons. Fast and highly maneuverable in combat on open terrain, it mounted a 37 mm. cannon and five machine guns. In combat against more heavily gunned and armored vehicles (in North Africa), the lightly armored M-3Al fared poorly.

[15] "Armor on Luzon," 16-17, 19; Gentry interview, UK; Lawrence Martin interview, 16 March 1961, NG, 1; Vandiver interview, NG, 2. The American-Filipino force appeared, on paper, very strong: 10 Philippine Army divisions (110,000 men), a core of U.S. troops (11,957 men), the U.S.-trained Philippine Scouts (19,138 men), 74 bombers (including 35 B-17s), and 175 fighters (including many P-40s). Morton, ***Fall of the Philippines,*** 49, 150.



Mary Lou Madigan

Eighteen days after their arrival in the Philippines, Company D's quiet routine ended abruptly. Radio reports of the disaster at Pearl Harbor reached Company D soon after the Japanese attacked that U.S. naval center, but some tankers remained unconvinced about the news. Nevertheless, the National Guard units took positions to guard against possible landings by paratroops at Clark Field, Fort Stotsenburg's airfield. Preparing equipment continued; indeed, Company D had barely finished installing machine guns on its half-tracks when the war began.16

About midday on December 8, Company D men were eating lunch on the field and in nearby messes. At a "chow truck" a group of them observed a large formation of aircraft passing high

16Claude Yeast interview, 17 March 1961, NC, 1; Op. Report, 6; French interview, UK.

overhead. Someone reportedly exclaimed, "Look at Uncle Sam's navy planes!" Impressions of airborne beauty soon withered at the recognition of Japanese markings and the whistle of falling bombs.

At battalion headquarters, Company D's 1st Lt. Edwin Rue heard the sirens and remarked to a nearby soldier, "Lieutenant, it looks like the war is coming." As bombs exploded nearby, the other man said to Rue, "Coming hell, it's here!""

In seconds the airfield became a scene from a nightmare. Smoke, flames, and dust seemed to be everywhere. Amid the chaos of exploding bombs, the tankers raced to their vehicles. Sgt. Morgan French jumped on a motorcycle and sped toward his unit, but the explosions, strafing bullets, and choking smoke forced him to seek cover in a ditch. Near the bomb-cratered runway, French donned a gas mask and tried to avoid the deadly events surrounding him. From his precarious vantage point, he saw "the whole place exploding." To his surprise French also saw an old Filipino tottering through the smoke. The elderly man was loudly complaining, in resignation and disgust, about the "Wargames, Wargames!" going on around him. French's warning to take cover went unheeded. When last seen, the apparently unharmed old man was shuffling down the road into the smoke.18

Others were not so fortunate. In general, the attack proved a catastrophe for the Americans, who could offer little resistance. An antiaircraft unit fired at the high altitude bombers without effect. With most U.S. aircraft destroyed on the ground, only a few planes got into the air and futilely engaged the swarm of attackers. In the most useful U.S. effort of the day, the armored units massed half-tracks on a golf course at the end of the runway. There they had a clear shot at the strafing enemy fighters. According to some accounts, the half-tracks' impromptu barrage downed six enemy planes.19 Similarly, Company D did not emerge from the attack unscathed. Some of the unit were severely

"Kenneth Hourigan interview, 1.5 March 1961, NG, 1; Grover D. Whittingill interview, 22 March 1961, NG, 1; Rue interview, NG, 3.

18French interview, UK.

19Toland, *But Not In Shame,* 51-52; Morton, *Fall of the Philippines, 88;* "Armor on Luzon," 21-22; Gentry interview, UK; Gentry interview, NG, 8; Bensing interview, UK; Brummett interview, UK; Field M. Reed interview, 13 August 1987, UK; Op. Report, 2. Japanese aircraft losses at Clark Field, including one Japanese fighter shot down by

unnerved by the shock of the attack. Unable to function in combat, they were reassigned to other duties.20

The men from Harrodsburg also sustained a fatality. Pvt. Robert Brooks died in the attack, thus becoming the first armored force casualty in the war. The day's grim developments also held an additional portent for the future. "From that time we never saw the inside of a barracks," Harrodsburg's Ralph Stine later observed. For this small group of Kentuckians four years of combat, isolation, mistreatment, malnutrition, and death had begun."

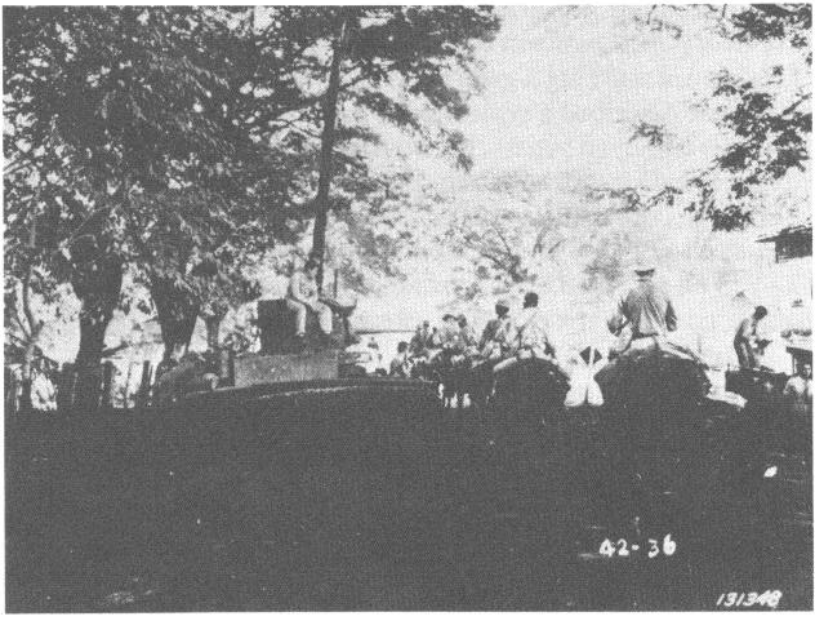
Retreat followed the Clark Field debacle. The early unreliability of Filipino troops and the small number of U.S. troops necessitated a withdrawal from the relatively open terrain of the Luzon Plain to the more defensible jungles of Bataan Peninsula. Divided into the North Luzon Force (four divisions) and the South Luzon Force (two divisions), the USAFFE tried vainly to contest Japanese landings in several locations. Initially sent to southern Luzon to oppose expected landings there, Company D and the rest of the 194th returned to the north after the Japanese came ashore from Lingayen Gulf in large numbers on December 22.

World War II's first tank vs. tank engagement for the Americans occurred on the twenty-second near Agoo, just inland from the Gulf. Col. Theodore Wickord, 192nd battalion commander, reportedly wanted his own unit, Company B, to be the first to meet the enemy in combat. Accordingly, tanks of Company B that day encountered Japanese armor and perhaps Japanese artillery. For the Americans, at least, heavy damage and one death resulted. There, with elements of battalion headquarters, Sgt. Grover C. Brummett of Harrodsburg helped remove from a tank the decapitated body of a Company B crewman.

Sgt. Zemon Bardowski (Co. B., 192nd), numbered seven. U.S. losses included 55 of 72 fighters, 18 B-17s (17 were on Mindanao), 25-35 older military aircraft, 80 servicemen killed, and 150 wounded.

"Brummett interview, UK; French interview, UK.

21French interview, UK; Wilson interview, NG, 2; John Elmore Sadler interview, 15 March 1961, NG, 1; Hourigan interview, NG, 9; Poweleit, ***Kentucky's Fighting 192nd,*** 32; Op. Report, 6; Ralph Stine interview, 24 March 1961, NG, 1. A black, Brooks had "passed" in this all-white unit. Reportedly, the U.S. Army, which had drafted him, did not know his race until after his death. Studs Terkel [Wilson], ***The Good War: An Oral History*** of ***World War*** Two (New York, 1984), 70; Hourigan interview, 29 March 1985, UK. See also "Colored Soldier Honored," ***Army-Navy Register*** (17 July 1942), 2.



U. S. Army Signal Corps

An M3Al Stuart tank waits while the 26th Cavalry (Philippine Scouts) rides into combat.

The remaining tankers acted as the rear guard during the USAFFE forces' retreat southward before forty-three thousand invaders. Although unable to halt the Japanese, the tanks could block temporarily the enemy advance and force their opponents into a time-consuming movement around the armor's position. Before the Japanese could attack, the tanks would withdraw rapidly to another blocking position. Then the whole procedure of blocking, flanking, and withdrawing would be repeated, During this "retrograde movement," as the army termed it, the tankers had a very difficult assignment.** Spread thinly along a wide front, they almost never saw a friendly unit. Because their only link to headquarters and to allies was by radio, the tankers experienced an acute sense of isolation and responsibility. Despite

22William H. Gentry to author, 4 July 1988; Op. Report, 10-11; Lt. Col. Thomas Dooley, "The First United States Tank Action in World War II," Advanced Officers Course #l, The Armored Force School, I May 1948, (copy), Office of the Chief of Military History, General Reference Bureau, 10; Brummett interview, UK; Morton, *Fall of the Philippines, 69,* 71.

these difficulties, the armored battalions staged holding actions at several points between the Luzon Plain and Bataan, each site of resistance marking a grim progress southward and westward. Brummett described a typical delaying action: near Cabanatuan the tanks deployed across the Japanese line of march, laid down intense fire (through which the enemy could approach no closer to the tanks than fifty yards), and then withdrew. On this route the tankers not only fought Japanese but also destroyed resources likely to be captured by the invaders — warehouses, rice caches, banks, and businesses. They executed, in Gentry's words, a "scorched earth policy."[23]

In the withdrawal, the tankers had problems of many kinds. In addition to the isolation, a terrible confusion about the location and availability of gasoline, food, and ammunition surrounded them. Making even simple arrangements for rest and refueling became enormously difficult. Gentry, for example, had to go for many days without sleep. Because of his responsibilities as an officer, he was denied the naps available to others during lulls. Making the tedious arrangements for food, fuel, and orders that kept the withdrawal going meant that rest came rarely. The chaos of the withdrawal also produced other difficulties. Civilians and Philippine army troops, all headed south, "clogged up" the roads on which truck driver Field M. "Jack" Reed had to carry gasoline and ammunition to the tanks. Furthermore, danger accompanied confusion and frustration. More than once the Kentuckian found himself behind Japanese lines. Roadblocks notwithstanding, Reed reached friendly territory by "driv[ing] the hell out of it."[24]

Materiel problems also emerged in combat. Equipped with armor-piercing shells, American tankers sometimes watched in frustration as their cannon shots were deflected by the angled armor plates of the Japanese tanks. High explosive ammunition, which detonated on impact, soon was used by some M-3's to disable the tracks or blow off the turrets of enemy tanks. Although the American tanks most often fought Japanese infantry or artillery, this unorthodox method of attacking Japanese

[23]Op. Report, 6-16; Morton, *Fall of the Philippines,* chapters 10-12; Alvin C. Poweleit interview, 30 May 1985, UK; Brummett interview, UK; Gentry interview, UK.

[24]Gentry interview, UK; Reed interview, UK.

armor proved effective when employed.25

Yet disaster remained for the Americans a constant possibility. In the early morning darkness of December 27, Company D became trapped behind rapidly advancing Japanese lines near Moncada, not far south of the enemy landing site at Lingayen Gulf. The 194th was trying to hold a twenty-five-mile front with thirty tanks and five half-tracks. The widely separated vehicles could maintain contact with each other and with allies only by radio. Coordination of activities was very difficult. Withdrawing south after brief contact with the enemy, Company D found a bridge on the Agno River destroyed — either bombed by the Japanese or prematurely demolished by the fleeing Philippine army. Tank commander Morris S. Collier received an urgent radio message from the company commander: the tanks were surrounded and the crews must abandon them immediately. There was no time to destroy the tanks, and the men must reach the river as quickly as possible and cross it. Ten to fifteen tanks plus some half-tracks and motorcycles were left on the road. Taking the non-swimmers and wounded with them, the men swam the river. Within days a few crews got tanks, either from company reserve, battalion maintenance, or other units. Some Company D men became relief crews, while still others manned half-tracks or trucks or carried rifles.26

A less frustrating tank exploit occurred farther south at the strategically located village of Baliuag. Immediate Japanese possession of the hamlet would endanger South Luzon Force's route to Bataan. Into this critical area MacArthur placed two infantry divisions (the 71st and 91st), artillery units, and two platoons of tanks. Harrodsburg's Lt. William Gentry, assigned to Company C, 192nd Tank Battalion, led the tanks in an attack in Baliuag. This Kentuckian and his men provided the USAFFE here with what a historian later called a "brief taste of victory." As a force of Japanese armor, artillery, and infantry approached from the north, Gentry received orders to hold Baliuag. On December 31,

25"Armor on Luzon," 87; Gentry interview, UK.

26Morton, *Fall of the Philippines,* 176-77, 176n; Miller, *Bataan Uncensored, 93, 97,* 104, 108-9; Morris S. Collier interview, 11 January 1988, UK; French interview, UK; Bensing interview, UK; Gentry interview, UK; Reed interview, UK; Hourigan interview, 23 July 1985, UK; Yeast interview, NG, 1; Morgan French to Col. Arthur L. Kelly, 4 October 1985, copy in author's possession.

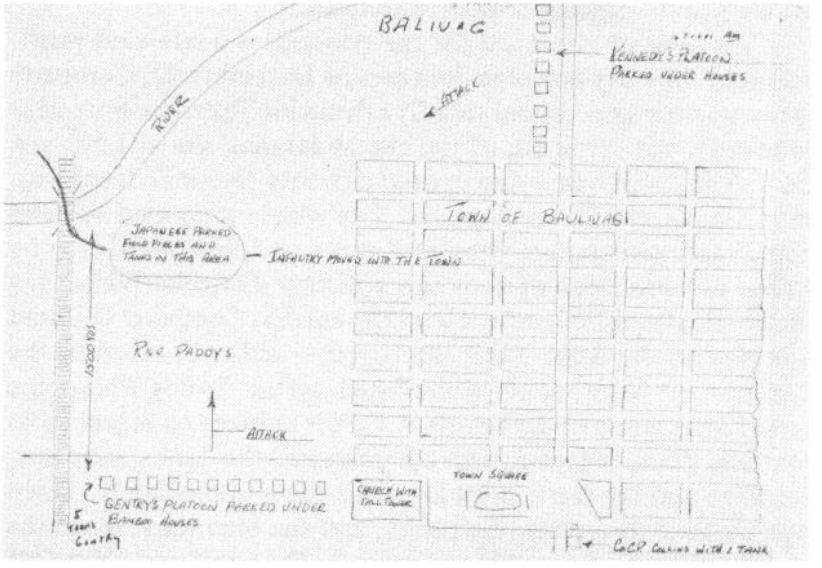


Diagram of the "brief taste of victory" at Baliuag. Courtesy of William H. Gentry.

the Americans hurriedly prepared an ambush: beneath the elevated huts of the deserted village, ten Stuart tanks waited for the enemy.

As Japanese foot soldiers slipped into town and occupied a church tower as an observation post, the Americans made no sound. To his surprise and alarm Gentry then saw an American jeep containing a major from headquarters drive into town. The Kentuckian quickly and earnestly advised the major to leave the hamlet without delay.

After seeing enemy forces gathering on the northern edges of Baliuag, the major departed, and at 5 p.m. Gentry sprang the trap. American tanks roared out of their hiding places and converged on the enemy vehicles and troops. In a violent melee which lasted until dark, American and Japanese tanks ran in and out of the thatched buildings and up and down Baliuag's streets. By the time headquarters ordered the Americans to withdraw, eight Japanese tanks had been destroyed or abandoned. The Americans lost no tanks. After Baliuag, Japanese tanks operated in groups of three or fewer. More important, the fighting at Baliuag and

their losses there slowed the Japanese. Early the next morning, South Luzon Force passed the endangered area unmolested.27

The tanks continued their rear guard role even after the divisions from the south crossed the Calumpit Bridges, last remaining links controlled by the USAFFE between northern and southern Luzon. Demolition efforts on January 1, following South Luzon Force's crossing, had left too much of the bridges intact. Consequently, Japanese pursuers would have little difficulty following the Filipino-American force and endangering the junction with divisions moving toward Bataan from the north. North of Calumpit, Gentry's company held a position near the bridges. Openly visible in the moonlight, the tanks waited behind large stacks of rice. When a large number of Japanese had crossed the river, the Americans fired through the rice bundles, igniting them, and, in the light of burning rice, began a prolonged fusillade. After two hours of firing at targets which could not approach closer than a thousand yards before being destroyed, the tanks ran out of ammunition and withdrew.**

From Calumpit the tanks traveled northwest to Porac. There they destroyed an enemy concentration of artillery which had been shelling one of the few bridges into Bataan. At the Layac Bridge in the early morning of January 6, Gentry's company was among the last to cross into Bataan. The subsequent destruction of the bridge marked the end of the USAFFE withdrawal and the beginning of the agony of Bataan.29

The siege on this jungled peninsula soon took its grim pattern. Equipment, supplies, and unit strength, both materiel and personal, ran out. After the junction at Layac of the USAFFE's northern and southern forces, there was a brief rest for the tankers. During this short bivouac of the armored battalions, Company D received a few tanks from other units. After the costly withdrawal, most companies of the armored rear guard were issued only nine tanks.30

"James, Years ***of MacArthur,*** 2:41; Gentry interview, UK; Morton, ***Fall of the Philippines, 206-7, 209;*** Op. Report, 14, 23.

Gentry interview, UK; Op. Report, 14-15; Japanese losses during the withdrawal numbered from 2,000 to 4,500. During the same period the USAFFE lost 13,000, mostly to desertions by troops of the Philippine Army. James, ***Years of MacArthur, 2:45.*

29Gentry interview, UK; Morton, ***Fall of the Philippines, 225.***

30Op. Report, 11-12, 16-19; Gentry interview, UK; Reed interview, UK.

Through January, Company D supported the hard-pressed lines in northeastern Bataan. Some units of the armored battalions, however, soon were on the offensive. Beginning January 23, two battalions of enemy infiltrators landed on three narrow fingers of land (points) on Bataan's west coast. Finally, after weeks of delaying actions and withdrawal, the tankers could attack. This time they did not break off contact and withdraw. This time no Japanese survived the three-week Battle of the Points. With combined land, sea, and air attacks, the USAFFE slowly decimated the invaders and literally drove the survivors into the sea.

Simultaneously with the assaults against the points, the USAFFE eliminated two other centers of enemy resistance behind the main battle line. In three weeks of savage tree-to-tree fighting, about one thousand Japanese who had penetrated USAFFE lines were surrounded and nearly annihilated. Crowded into a jungle valley for this Battle of the Pockets, the tanks could not maneuver freely. Igorot tribesmen friendly to Americans rode atop the tanks and tapped signals for stop, go, left, or right on the turret. These primitive warriors were less concerned with their own safety than with other matters. For example, one such tribesman Gentry knew repeatedly stole mortar ammunition from the enemy enclave. (The USAFFE returned the shells by firing them back at the doomed infiltrators.) Another Igorot amassed a collection of Japanese jaw bones, which he hung from trees."

By February, fuel shortages forced most tank units to give up their prized mobility. Along Bataan's eastern and southern coasts, the armored companies formed an effective barrier against enemy amphibious landings. The Harrodsburg men, though at some distance from the main battle line, could never ignore the desperate fighting. The Kentuckians could always hear the shelling, the aerial bombing, and the machine guns. Additionally, the threat from the air was severe: to avoid being spotted by planes, all light reflectors — windshields, headlights, and even belt buckles — were removed. And, as Company D's Stine later recalled, each morning they could see a dozen new bodies washed ashore. [32]

[31] *See* Morton, ***Fall of the Philippines,*** chapters 17 and 18; Toland, ***But Not In Shame,*** 190; Gentry interview, UK.

[32] "LArmor on Luzon," 33; Stine interview, NG, 1.

The USAFFE also faced enemies as implacable as the Japanese disease and famine. For the eighty thousand military and twenty-six thousand civilians on Bataan, severed supply lines force shortages of gasoline, medicine, and, most urgent, food. Many of this desperate horde were severely weakened by epidemic malaria and dysentery, and all by shortages of rations. Before long, menu substitutes became necessary. But eating horses, water buffalo, birds, monkeys, iguanas ("Panama chicken"), snakes, and mice — "everything that moved," as one Harrodsburg man described — did not meet health needs.33 Significantly, the diet lacked calories, protein, fat, and vitamins. The Americans averaged fifteen to twenty-five pounds in weight loss during the Bataan campaign. Not only was the diet deficient in calories (about one thousand calories per day — Philippine army troops received even smaller rations), but it also lacked necessary nutrients. For example, the men received thirty to forty grams of protein each day. About one thousand grams per day were needed to maintain their health. Protein deficiency symptoms such as fatigue and weakness became major problems. Minor complications also became obvious. Even small wounds would not heal. When MacArthur visited the tankers' headquarters, he asked why these run-down, sore-covered men were not in the hospital. Kentuckian Alvin C. Poweleit, a physician, replied, "Who would man the tanks?" The usually verbose MacArthur could only shake his head sadly and say, "I know."34

After a March lull, during which the Japanese received reinforcements and MacArthur and a few others deemed too valuable to lose left the Philippines, the final enemy offensive in Bataan began in early April. Company D's remaining tanks joined the USAFFE's losing fight along the Peninsula's east coast highway. When the fighting ceased, Company D was near Cabcaben on

"Morton, *Fall of the Philippines,* 367; Brummett interview, UK; Gentry interview, UK.

34 Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting I92nd, 55-56, 63, 67;* Morton, *Fall of the Philippines,* 367-84. Through a combination of bad planning, panic, and bureaucratic stupidity, Bataan lacked virtually everything — food, medicine, engineering equipment — needed to sustain a long siege. Ten million gallons of gasoline in Manila and untold masses of supplies at Ft. Stotsenburg were destroyed in the haste of retreat. Fifty million pounds of rice in Cabanatuan were abandoned. The failure to supply Bataan was "the cardinal blunder" made by the USAFFE. James, *Years of MacArthur,*

the tip of Bataan.35 The USAFFE had at last run out of supplies, health, space, and luck. Their battlelines disrupted, their effective troops overextended, and their ammunition, food, and medicine nearly exhausted, the USAFFE surrendered on April 9.

Still, the tankers remained resolute and determined to the end. All realized the ultimate hopelessness of the Bataan siege, but they firmly believed gasoline, food, and medicine were all the armored force lacked — not courage, skill, or dedication. After ah, since the war began, the tankers had bested the Japanese in most encounters. Even at the surrender, in their maelstrom of emotions, the tankers' dominant feelings were of disgust and frustrated anger, not depression. As one Harrodsburg man put it, they were proud of their record. Most historians doubt the armored battalions significantly influenced the course of the campaign. Some facts, however, are clear. The tankers had inflicted substantial losses on the enemy and, despite enormous handicaps, had continued to fight. They believed they had done all that was possible. During combat and later in prison, the tankers and the rest of the USAFFE army always took satisfaction in calling themselves the "Battling Bastards of Bataan." Moreover, the tankers resolved to maintain contact with each other as prisoners of war, "to see it through as a group," in one Kentuckian's phrase.36

Along with the order to surrender came directives to destroy the tanks and firearms. With that task completed, Company D's commander (a Texan) led some of the men into the jungle for what one veteran called "our last communion" of pineapple juice and light bread. The captain reportedly said, "From now on, boys, it's every man for himself," and wished them luck."' The captain's fundamental misjudgment about the key to survival soon became evident. Throughout the next few weeks the cooperation and interdependence characteristic of all POWs — seen clearly but not exclusively in the Harrodsburg men — evolved into a lifesaving necessity. The bond between prisoners proved more necessary than rugged individualism, and more needed than the minimal requirements for food, health, and safety.

35"Armor on Luzon," 33; Op. Report, 21.

36Tollier interview, UK; Reed interview, UK; Brummett interview, UK, Gentry interview. UK.

37Vandiver interview, NG, 2-3. For its conduct of operations from 8 December 1941 to 8 April 1942. the Provisional Tank Group received the following decorations: three

III

Immediately after their surrender, the Kentuckians learned not to resist Japanese rough treatment. In this new world of guards and prisoners, even such a token act of resistance as hiding a ring or a watch fob brought dire consequences. For example, a guard spied Grover D. Whittinghill's class ring and motioned for the Harrodsburg man to take it off. Whittinghill indicated the ring was too tight to remove, but when the Japanese reached for a bayonet, Whittinghill "got that ring off."[38]

Not far away from Whittinghill's encounter, Gentry and other tankers, marching to a prisoners' gathering area, witnessed a grim harbinger of their future in the hands of the guards. Several prisoners near the front of the column were hit over the head with their own helmets (World War I-type helmets with a rivet protruding from the top). The bloody heads of their unlucky comrades induced all to "get rid of those dang helmets." Though necessary, the decision to throw away helmets proved costly because of the tropical sun.

Soon conditions deteriorated even more. At the Mariveles airstrip, and at other locations in southern Bataan, the Americans had to sit in the sun for many hours. Crowded together in the long lines while the Japanese struggled to organize the situation,

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Distinguished Services Crosses, one Distinguished Service Medal, four Legions of Merit, twelve Silver Stars with three oak leaf clusters, eighteen Bronze Stars, and three U.S. Presidential Unit Citations. Harrodsburg's Company D received the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation in addition to the American unit citations. Lt. William H. Gentry of Harrodsburg received the Silver Star with oak leaf cluster for the action at Baliuag and for the Battle of the Tuol Pocket. Kentucky physician Alvin C. Poweleit received the Legion of Merit for the rescue of wounded at Gapan. ***Armor*** on ***Luzon,*** 43; Janice E. McKenney, U.S. Army Organizational History Branch, to author, 2 January 1985; Lt. Col. Arpad A. Szurgyi, Military Awards Branch, U.S. Army Military Personnel Center, to author, 30 November 1987; Extracts, General Order No. 5, 31 January 1942, General Order No. 10. 14 February 1942, both in Gentry Papers.

"Whittinghill interview, NG, 2. For the Japanese perspective on war aims and army life, see Saburo Ienaga, ***The Pacific War*** (New York, 1978); John Toland, The ***Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire,*** 19361945 (New York, 1976); Tetsuro Ogawa, ***Terraced Hell: A Japanese Memoir of Defeat and Death in Northern Luzon, Philippines*** (Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, 1972), and Tamatsu Shibutani, ***The Derelicts of Company K: A Sociological Study of Demoralization*** (Berkeley, Calif., 1978). A well-known but extremely jaundiced account of the samurai tradition in World War II is Lord Russell of Liverpool, ***The Knights of Bushido: The Shocking History of Japanese War Atrocities (New*** York, 1968).

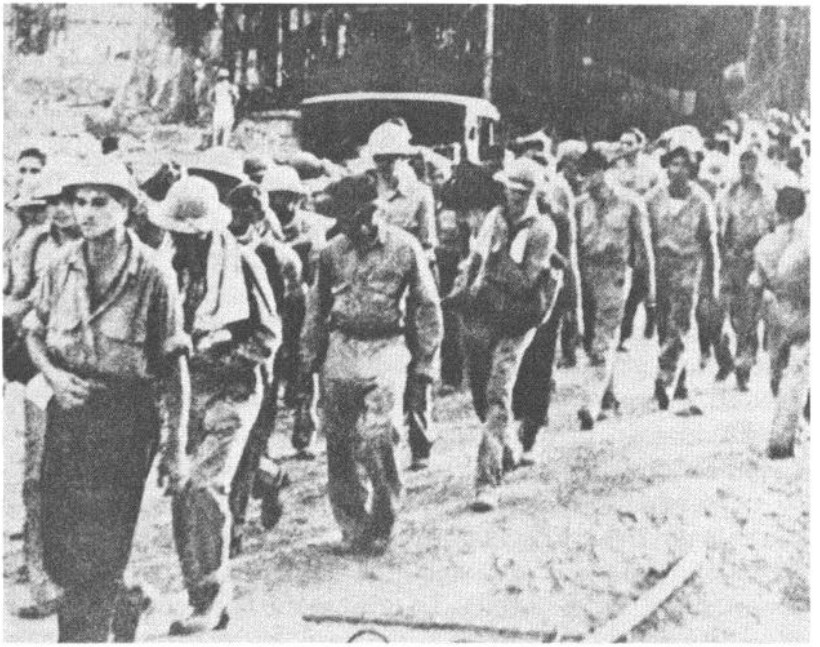
Cecil Vandiver and Lawrence Martin soon learned how precarious their existence as prisoners would be. Guards brandishing rifles lined up facing the prisoners. Vandiver said, "I suppose this is it." Martin replied, "It guess it is. . . . If you know any prayers, you'd better be saying them." Suddenly, a Japanese officer drove up and ordered the guards not to fire.39

Other horrors developed. Within a few days the Japanese began moving USAFFE prisoners out of Bataan. The 76,500 survivors of the Bataan siege (11,500 Americans and 65,000 Filipinos) were far more numerous than the victors had expected. More important, the debilitated physical condition of the defeated USAFFE was much worse than the Japanese anticipated. Consequently, not enough trucks, guards, or medical supplies were available for the operation. Moreover, the savageries of war exacerbated an already dangerous climate. Murderous inconsistency characterized Japanese conduct; some guards gave food and water to the prisoners, while others looted, maimed, and killed with abandon.

The Harrodsburg men quickly recognized the enormity of their plight. A guard who spoke English told Collier the Japanese words for rest, march, and water. He also gave the Kentuckian valuable advice: obey any command from a Japanese and obey it quickly. Also early in the ordeal Cecil Sims saw a Japanese guard, too exhausted to continue marching, shot to death by his countrymen. Ever inconsistent, the guards allowed some prisoners to ride on trucks. Most POWs walked. Poor planning, epidemic sickness, cruelty, and abysmal command of the guards together doomed the operation. Even before the first step was taken, all the elements of a major disaster were present. None of the survivors can forget this trek known to history as the Bataan Death March.4O

"Gentry interview, UK; Reed interview, UK; Martin interview, NG, 3.

40William Lee Peavler interview, 22 March 1961, NG, 1-2; Collier interview, UK; Cecil Sims interview, 28 September 1987, UK, Gentry interview, UK; Toland, But ***Not In Shame,*** 329. On the Death March see E. Bartlett Kerr, ***Surrender and Survival: The Experience of American POWs in the Pacific, 19414945 (New*** York, 1962), esp. 49-68; Stanley L. Falk, ***Bataan: The March of Death (New*** York, 1962); and Donald Knox, ***Death March: The Survivors of Bataan*** (San Diego, New York, and London, 1981). Knox's work, a collection of narratives by sixty-eight Bataan and POW camp survivors, confirms the recollections of Company D veterans on many subjects.



Kentucky Military History Museum

The Bataan Death March.

The journey from Bataan to Camp O'Donnell, a former Philippine army training site, stretched fifty to sixty miles, depending on where a soldier was taken prisoner. Gentry traveled in a typically sized group of about one hundred, which marched for eleven days. During the trek, he had one rice ball, two stalks of sugar cane, seven canteens of water, and the agony of malaria. During two days of delirium, comrades shepherded him along.41

On this ghastly parade, difficulties of all kinds plagued the marchers — dysentery, malaria, thirst, fatigue, heat exhaustion, and the cruelty of guards. Martin was able to move ahead of his group and, out of the guards' sight, obtain water from artesian wells. Many less fortunate marchers trying this gambit were shot. To compound the prisoners' misery, frequent changes in the guard complement kept the brutality level high. Each new crew of guards exacted a price in intimidation and, sometimes, blood. For no apparent reason a guard bayonetted William Lee Peavler in the leg. Marching beside him, Collier hurriedly treated the injury by

"Kerr, *Surrender and Survival,* 52; Brummett interview, UK.

pouring iodine directly into the wound. Not daring to stop for rest or medical treatment, both men continued marching. Lesser cruelties than a bayonet in the leg also abounded. Reed quickly learned to stay on the column's inside files. Japanese troops aboard passing trucks swung sticks or rifle butts at marchers' heads. More thirsty than careful, Vandiver broke line and, within a guard's sight, reached an artesian well. The Kentuckian had half-filled the canteen when the guard arrived. Now in considerable peril, Vandiver was desperate enough for water to attempt a quick swallow. He had raised the canteen to his lips when the guard knocked him down. The water spilled on the ground.42 Death could come from almost any quarter — heatstroke, disease, or the rifles and bayonets of guards. Gentry's constant thought was, "Who's gonna be next?"43

Out of such travails, repeated hundreds of times throughout the column, the prisoners practiced a lifesaving interdependence. Supplies of all kinds were shared. The weak were helped, sometimes carried, by the strong. To prevent the murder of stragglers, marchers placed the sickest at the head of the column. For the Harrodsburg men, seeing each other occasionally in this horrible whirl of misery helped. Reed, Lyle Harlow, and Lonnie Gray saw each other. Collier and Peavler walked together. So did Vandiver and Bland Moore. Knowing that one's friend still lived was a comfort at a time when comfort was rare. Exemplifying the interdependence of prisoners, Vandiver shared with others his meager cache of burned rice, tree bark, and green banana shoots. In a clear example of prisoner cooperation, Vandiver later depended on two other soldiers when he could walk no more. For two days they "half-dragged" him along until he could move on his own.44

Such acts of unselfishness and compassion could not save all the marchers. Some desperate prisoners ran from the line of march. Guards and fatal rifle shots followed. Gentry saw prisoners forced to dig graves into which they were thrown after being

42 Martin interview, NG, 3; Knox, Death *March,* 134-35; Peavler interview, NG, 2; Collier interview, UK; Reed interview, UK; Vandiver interview, NG, 3.

43 Reed interview, UK; Vandiver interview, NG, 4.7; Brummett interview, UK, Gentry interview, UK.

44 Knox. *Death March,* 136-46; Reed interview, UK; Vandiver interview, NG, 3, 8.

shot. Poweleit witnessed beheadings. Reed saw men buried alive.[45] Vandiver even witnessed a suicide. Marching near the Kentuckian, a distraught major leapt from a bridge over a muddy creekbed. The impact enveloped the officer in sticky ooze up to his shoulders. The marching column had to move on, leaving him there. Although no one can determine the exact number of prisoners who died on the march, historians estimate the deaths at about six hundred Americans and five to ten thousand Filipinos."

Mercifully, some of the Harrodsburg men had escaped from Bataan to nearby Corregidor Island. There, the site of USAFFE headquarters, the underground complex of Malinta Tunnel offered brief refuge and a different kind of pain. French and a few comrades stayed in the tunnel only about twenty minutes. Inside were a mixture of command staff, survivors of destroyed units, and some who were "stir crazy and crying and laughing. . . ." French then concluded that "we'd rather be outside and let the bombs get us" than stay in that madhouse. Outside, constant artillery fire from Bataan made "beach defense" as hazardous as French had imagined. Under this heavy barrage, army, navy, and marine personnel, including several from Company D, prepared defensive positions for the inevitable Japanese assault.[47]

Corregidor virtually bristled with cannons answering the fire from Bataan, but regular artillery personnel did the firing. Displaced men, like those of Company D, could wait in the tunnel or join the futile beach defense. Rather than endure the maddening anticipation of Corregidor, some men of Company D volunteered for a detail going to an artillery position in Manila Bay. There the prospects for survival would be no better than

"Gentry interview, UK; Poweleit interview, UK; idem, ***Kentucky's Fighting 192nd,*** 88; Reed interview, UK.

46 Vandiver interview, NG, 8; Falk, ***March*** of ***Death,*** 197-98; Kerr, ***Surrender and Survival,*** 59-60; William E. Brougher. ***South to Bataan, North to Mukden; The Prison Diary of Brigadier General W. E. Brougher,*** ed. D. Clayton James (Athens, Ga., 1971), 41. After the war General Masaharu Homma, the Japanese commander in chief of the invasion of the Philippines, and two subordinates were executed for their responsibilities in the Bataan Death March.

"French interview, UK; Earl Fowler interview, 17 March 1968, NG, 3; Marcus A. Lawson interview, 16 March 1961, NG, 4; Hourigan interview, NG, 4; Yeast interview, NG, ***2.***

on Corregidor, but at least the Kentuckians could shoot at the enemy.

In Manila Bay twenty displaced servicemen, including Joe Riley Anness, John Elmore Sadler, and French, found places as crewmen of Ft. Drum, a "concrete battleship." This gun emplacement built on a small island resembled the bow, turrets, and superstructure of a naval vessel. Ft. Drum represented a marked change for the Bataan soldiers, now used to deprivation. The artillery personnel generously shared their clothing, toilet articles, and food.48

Anness helped load and fire the "fort's" large cannons. Sadler and French joined the antiaircraft gunners atop the structure. For those on top, exposure to enemy bombing posed both a danger and an opportunity. After a bombing attack the Americans would swim out and gather fish killed by Japanese near-misses. A "big fish fry" often ensued.49

Back on Corregidor the expected Japanese landings came on May 5. Resistance was intense (50 to 75 percent casualties in the invasion force), but brief. The Corregidor defenders, with eight hundred dead and one thousand wounded, capitulated the next day. Company D's Marcus A. Lawson witnessed the surrender of Malinta Tunnel. He saw Japanese tanks pull up to the tunnel entrance and USAFFE commander Maj. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright's final, tearful salute to his troops.50 At the news of Corregidor's surrender, the men on Ft. Drum began eating as much of their food supplies as possible. Not knowing when, if ever, they would have good food again, the men opened cans throughout the afternoon and evening and ate their fill."

The Company D men on Ft. Drum and Corregidor now experienced the brutal and frustrating initial contact with the

48 Joe Riley Anness interview, 19 March 1961, NG, 6; Wilson interview, NG, 6. A proposed fleet of such positions was to guard the bay, but disarmament treaties in the 1920s left Ft. Drum the only pseudo-vessel among the cannon positions in and around the bay. Morton, *Fall of the Philippines,* 477-78.

49 Anness interview, NG, 7; French interview, UK; Sadler interview, NG, 3.

50 Morton, *Fall of the Philippines,* 556-57; Lawson interview, NG, 5.

"Anness interview, NG, 7. In April 1945, during the American invasion of the Philippines, troops of the 38th Division (composed of the National Guards of Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia) pumped three thousand gallons of oil into Ft. Drum. After detonation of a large explosive charge, "the ship" burned for several days. All sixty-five Japanese inside died. *38th Division History* (n.p., n.d.), 18-19.

Japanese guards earlier endured by those on Bataan. Severe water shortages, seemingly pointless waiting in the sun, repeated looting of personal effects, and being spared at the last moment from apparent execution all characterized the transition from warrior to prisoner. Those on Corregidor eventually went by ship to Bilibid prison in Manila. The Ft. Drum crewmen, regular and ad hoc, had to empty the well-stocked stores of the fort and transfer all materials to the Japanese. After several days of this labor, the Ft. Drum men also traveled to Manila by boat. Again water shortages posed a major difficulty.52

Simultaneously, Death March survivors faced an even more deadly trial — Camp O'Donnell. For many prisoners who lived through the Death March and a hellishly crowded train ride from San Fernando to Capas and a short march to the camp, O'Donnell became a death trap. Earlier, the Japanese had estimated that O'Donnell could hold thirty thousand prisoners. Nearly twice that number crowded into the barbed-wire enclosure. This overcrowding, epidemic malaria and dysentery, plus the guards' random sadism, wrought a staggeringly high death rate. In the three months following the Bataan surrender, the conditions at O'Donnell claimed fifteen hundred Americans (seventeen per day). In this same period, due to differences in diet, crowding, and sanitation, Filipino prisoners died at an even higher rate. At O'Donnell, twenty thousand Filipinos died (two hundred fifty per day). To their credit the Japanese did not permit this debacle to continue. In May, the camp commander was relieved and O'Donnell was ordered closed.53

Despite its quick eradication, O'Donnell made lasting memories for the Kentuckians. Years later Gentry recalled the daylong lines of men waiting for water at the camp's two faucets. Vandiver remembered trying to place a hometown buddy individually in a grave. Guards pushed Vandiver into the grave and threat-

52 Fowler interview, NG, 4; Lawson interview, NG, 5.

53 Gentry interview, UK; Brummett interview, UK; Bensing interview, UK; Poweleit interview, UK; Kerr, *Surrender and Survival,* 60,65,80,93; Brougher, South *to Bataan, North to Mukden,* 41-42; Office of the Provost Marshall General, Report on American Prisoners of War Interned by the Japanese in the Philippines, Camp O'Donnell, 19 November 1945 (copy), National Archives (hereafter OPMG Report . . . [camp name]). The Japanese commandant of Camp O'Donnell was given a long prison term at the postwar war crimes trials.

ened to bury him alive for violating the mass burial policy. Company D's Brummett, also on burial detail, had to hold the first corpses in a grave with the blade of his shovel. Otherwise, the bodies would float out of the water-soaked soil; only when more bodies were piled on would the dead be still. Battalion surgeon Poweleit later wrote of a hospital area "filled with prisoners milling around, defecating anywhere. . . . Men were lying, sleeping, and dying in their own waste."[54]

Early in June, most of O'Donnell's prisoners went to Cabanatuan's Camp #l or on details into the countryside. Prisoners unable to move and medical personnel remained at O'Donnell for a time. Already at Cabanatuan's Camp #3, six thousand relatively healthier prisoners from Corregidor viewed their newly arrived comrades from O'Donnell with dismay. Not only was the debilitated and diseased state of these Death March survivors shocking to see, there was also a real danger their virulent malaria and dysentery would spread throughout Cabanatuan. What was feared happened. Heavy rain caused the latrines to overflow. Abundant flies quickly spread dysentery. Mosquito swarms did the same with malaria. A wave of deaths hit Camp #l by the end of July. At the relatively healthy Camp #3, 32 of 6,000 died by July 30, compared to 1,286 deaths at Camp #l during the same period."

In addition to the dangers of disease, beatings were commonplace and execution possible. An especially brutal episode at Cabanatuan was witnessed by several Harrodsburg men.[56] Lawson later described the execution of four unsuccessful escapees.

> **[The Japanese] tied them out in the middle of the compound all day in the boiling sun and all one night and all the next day and was showing them water but wouldn't give it to them. . . . [The guards] marched them to where we were eating supper, lined them all up by their grade, and gave them all a cigarette and a drink of water. . . . [After the guards fired, the prisoners] all fell back in their graves. One wasn't completely dead. He tried to climb out and then a Jap officer went down amongst them and gave him what you call a "mercy shot."[57]**

54 Gentry interview, UK; Vandiver interview, NG, 8; Brummett interview, UK; Poweleit, *Kentucky's Fighting 192nd,* 106.

55 Kerr, *Surrender and Survival,* 80-81,93,95,102; OPMG Report . . . Cabanatuan.

56 Wilson interview, NG, 9-10, Fowler interview, NG, 4-5; Lawson interview, NG, 6-7.

57 Lawson interview, NG, 6.

Yet even during the brutality of the early days of imprisonment, episodes of humanity occurred. At Cabanatuan, Collier resisted assignment to a detail which was to bury a close friend. The guard threatened Collier, but a Japanese officer intervened. Collier was excused from the burial party. At Bilibid, a Harrodsburg man was dying of dysentery, but the prison's Japanese doctor possessed only the small, insufficient amounts of medicine smuggled in by Filipinos. At the burial of this American, in a garden rather than a mass grave, the Japanese doctor attended the internment in tears.58

Such isolated moments of humane sympathy, however, did not ameliorate the deadly epidemics at Cabanatuan. Prisoner initiative did help. With the approval of the Japanese, the prisoners began to administer many parts of daily life in the compound. Sanitation, work detail selection, and general order fell under the aegis of American army bureaucracy. Efficient management lowered the death rate, but so did the Japanese's removal of most sick prisoners from Cabanatuan's main facility, Camp #l , to the smaller Camp #3, where they were expected to die.59 Cabanatuan's living conditions also were stabilized by the departure of large prisoner contingents on work details to various Luzon locations. Work details away from the prison compound could be good: sent to Bataan to repair roads, Reed worked under Japanese civilian engineers who treated POWs humanely. Other details, however, could be bad: Reed later experienced routine and sadistic beatings at the Nichols Field project.60

Yet prison at Cabanatuan, as well as the Nichols Field detail and even the Death March, offered the benefits of repeated contacts between the Harrodsburg men. In Cabanatuan, Lawson knew Anness, Rue, Jennings B. Scanlon, George A. Vanarsdale, Charles Quinn, and Gentry. Reed knew Ben Devine, Wallace Denny, Yandell Terhune, French, and "Doc" Sparrow. There the ailing Sadler even met his brother, who nursed him back to "health" with duck eggs and burned rice tea. This contact with friendly faces and the emotional support offered by shared experience and hometown memories boosted these men's spirits

"Collier interview, UK; Charles Reed interview, 24 March l96l, NG, 3.
59 OPMG Report . . . Cabanatuan.
60Kerr, ***Surrender Survival,*** 123; Martin interview, NG, 5; Reed interview, UK.

immeasurably. Hourigan later testified about the comfort of having friends near who were so intimate they had "had chicken off the same bone" in childhood.61

In spite of the emotional comfort such contact provided, the prisoners still ran a gauntlet of diseases. As the malaria/dysentery storm passed, nutritional deficiency problems flourished. The diet of rice, soup flavored with a fish head or vegetable refuse, and occasional small portions of meat virtually invited beri beri, pellegra, scurvy, and other related maladies. Almost every prisoner had a variety of diseases, but those who lost the will to continue this hard lot usually died within a matter of weeks. Generally, prisoners adapted. In addition to increasing their skill at preparing the rice ration and at smuggling and black marketing, most POWs did whatever was required to survive. Worms and bugs in the rice ration became valued as a source of protein. A rusty nail left in water for a long time provided the diet with a small dose of iron. Also, native plants could have supplied some vitamins, although prisoners reportedly did not enthusiastically pursue this source.62

In 1943, life at Cabanatuan reached a tenuous normality. Daily life remained grim, but not usually life-threatening, although guards remained lethally unpredictable. American administration within the prisoner compound had produced a respite from malaria/dysentery epidemics, and U.S. direction of work, morale, recreation, and security had brought improvements. American control also produced a fairly adequate drainage system, popular fly-swatting contests, and a number of shoestring facilities. A hospital, a bakery, a library, an orchestra, a PX, and a thriving black market graced the prison's mundane life. Daylong labor on the camp farm still allowed a brief time before lights out to rest and eat. Even the death rate improved. Since late 1942, American administrative control had reduced the death rate from between thirty and forty per day (in June) to ten per day (in August). Mass burials every third day became routine. But the shallow graves in water-logged soil often were grisly spec-

"Lawson interview, NG, 7; Reed interview, UK; Sadler interview, NG, 4; Hourigan interview, 29 March 1985, UK.

62 Kerr, ***Surrender and*** Survival, 99; Reed interview, UK; Bensing interview, UK; Poweleit interview, UK.

Prisoners and guards at Cabanatuan pose for a tense moment. Courtesy of Morgan French.

tacles. Wild dogs frequently pulled corpses partially out of the ground and left mangled bodies sitting up in the grave. Other horrors also occurred. A few POWs, especially the traders and black marketeers, preyed on other prisoners, lending food at usurious interest rates or selling it at exorbitant prices. POW opportunists, in Reed's description, were "almost animalistic."[63]

Greater savageries awaited the prisoners. By September 1944, Allied forces were approaching the Philippines. Ironically, this development totally disrupted the prisoners' world and led to the deaths of thousands. As early as 1942, groups of POWs (four shiploads, 1942-43) had been shipped to Manchuria, Formosa, and Japan. In 1944, the Japanese moved thousands of so-called able-bodied prisoners north to areas more secure than the Philippines. Seven unmarked cargo vessels, some recently used to transport coal and horses, inched their way through a web of U.S. aircraft and submarine patrols. On these monthlong voyages, attacks by American forces or the crowding, heat, and disease aboard the "Hell Ships" claimed the lives of about five thousand prisoners. Years later one Harrodsburg tanker who had experienced both termed the torment of these miserable scows "worse than the Death March."[64]

Overcrowding and squalor were almost unimaginable. Hundreds of men were crammed into holds not fifty feet square. On some ships the hold itself had been divided into spaces too small to allow a man to stand. According to Earl Fowler, the men on

63 OPMG, Report . . . Cabanatuan; Kerr, ***Surrender and Survival,*** 93-105; Ernest A. Norquist, "Three Years in Paradise, A G.I. Prisoner of War Diary, 1942-1945," ***Wisconsin Magazine of History*** 63 (1979): 6, 8-9; Hourigan interview, 29 March 1985, UK; Reed interview, UK. At the postwar war crimes trials the Japanese commandant at Cabanatuan received a long prison term.

64 Kerr, ***Surrender and Survival,*** chapters 11 and 12; Sims interview, UK; Bensing interview, UK; Stan Sommers, The ***Japanese Story,*** American Ex-Prisoners of War, National Medsearch Research Committee Packet 10 (Marshfield, Wisc., 1980), 34. Japanese guards at the prison camp on Palawan Island, west of Luzon, panicked on 14 December 1944 at a false report of the expected Americaninvasion. Of the 150 POWs, 139 (including Harrodsburg's Joseph Million and Willard R. Yeast) were massacred. Events were kinder to other Company D men. When most other POWs were shipped out of the Philippines, 516 prisoners were left at Cabanatuan because of their poor physical condition. William Gentry, Field Reed, Charles Quinn, Garret Royalty, and Ben Devine (who died in late 1944) were among those at this camp. When American forces recaptured Luzon, a dramatic 30 January 1945, raid by U.S. Rangers and Philippine guerrillas liberated the camp. Gentry interview, UK; Reed interview, UK; Forrest Bryant Johnson, ***Hour of Redemption: The Ranger Raid on Cabanatuan (New*** York, 1978).

his ship were "packed like sardines . . . and dying like flies." Brummett's ship was so crowded he had to sit for three days before his turn to stand for several hours. In the sweltering holds sanitation and meals were primitive. For toilets there were only barrels or cans occasionally lowered from the deck. For food prisoners typically had one cup of rice and one cup of water per day.65

Conditions in the hold beggar description in their wretchedness. Brummett's ship was inhumanly crowded: a prisoner had to sit, legs extended, with the next prisoner's back almost touching his face. Darkness, crowding, and extreme heat caused some to go berserk. Fights broke out. A few prisoners tried to climb ladders to the deck. Had others not restrained them, the guards would have had even more dead victims. Some prisoners, driven by thirst and madness, drank the blood of weaker comrades. To keep his sanity Brummett thought about Bataan, home, and postwar plans. The horrors immediately before him were too great to contemplate.66

During air attacks the guards shut the cover of the hold, the only source of light and air. Added to the terror of explosions outside and darkness inside was uncertainty. If the ship was damaged or sinking, would the prisoners be freed, shot, or trapped? For thousands of unlucky prisoners on the four ships sunk by bombs or torpedoes, the awful uncertainties became terrible realities. Either from their own fragile health, the bestial conditions in the hold, or the sinking of their ship, eight Harrodsburg men died on the Hell Ships.67

Eventually, survivors reached their northern destinations. In Mukden, Manchuria, the Kentuckians found factory work and intense cold instead of the farm labor and tropical heat they had known. At Mukden's Hoten camp, the work of prisoners was mundane but strictly enforced. Fowler routinely carried railroad ties, picked up rocks, and unloaded carloads of cement sacks, sheet iron, and coal. Prisoners who took unauthorized rests received beatings. Others ran lathes, drill presses, and simple types

65Fowler interview, NG, 5; Brummett interview, UK; Lawson interview, NG, 7; Martin interview, NG, 6.

66Brummett interview, UK.

67Kerr, *Surrender and Survival,* 199-232. For a listing of the Harrodsburg men who died on these ships see Appendix I.

of manufacturing equipment for making cigarette holders and smoking pipes. At least one attempt to have prisoners make rifle barrels failed. Vandiver intentionally "goof[ed] off and mess[ed] them up." Guards ran such machinists outside into the cold to stack 1umber.[68]

The Manchurian weather exerted a pressure as severe as the hard labor and beatings. Dead POWs were boxed up and placed in warehouses until spring, when the winter-frozen soil thawed enough for graves to be dug. Heating the barnlike barracks, however, took priority over conventional burials. Two bodies were placed in some coffins. Empty coffins were broken up and used for firewood.[69]

The eternal quest for food at Hoten proved as demanding as that for warmth. Dogs, cats, sparrows, and other small animals were added to the meager official diet. Another unofficial diet supplement involved a Kentuckian, hogs, and a measure of deception. Claude Yeast of Harrodsburg was given the task of feeding a number of hogs the guards had collected. Without the Japanese knowing, Yeast built a shack onto the "hog house," where he secretly fed POWs hot bowls of hog feed. The hogs never did gain weight.[70]

Such elements of farce at Hoten, however, were overshadowed by grimmer realities: the routine beating of prisoners, the malnutrition, and the disease. Death could even come from the air. Indeed, on December 19, 1944, an American air raid on the area killed nineteen of Hoten's prisoners.[71]

The grim existence of the prisoners was not a characteristic of Manchuria alone. In Japan, American POWs worked in mines, factories, and shipyards as they struggled to survive in more than thirty prison camps throughout the country. Many prisoners,

68Fowler interview, NG, 6-7; Vandiver interview, NG, 6.

69Capt. James I. Norwood and Capt. Emily L. Shek, "Prisoner of War Camps in Areas Other Than the Four Principal Islands of Japan — Mukden Prisoner of War Camp (Hoten Main Camp) Mukden, Manchuria," Liaison and Research Branch, American Prisoner of War Information Bureau, 31 July 1946 (copy), National Archives (hereafter Nonvood and Shek, "Hoten Main Camp"); Brougher, South *to Bataan, North to Mukden,* 149-50; Vandiver interview, NG, 5. At Hoten, three large two-story barracks held about three hundred fifty prisoners each.

70Vandiver interview, NG, 6.

71Fowler interview, NG, 7-8; Vandiver interview, NG, 6; Norwood and Shek, "Hoten Main Camp."

however, would not do work directly related to the war. For example, Lawson, assigned to stevedore work, joined comrades in refusing to unload a ship carrying bombs. Guards retaliated with beatings, but no bombs were unloaded.72

Prisoner resistance had flickered from the beginning. At different times and places, the Harrodsburg men had varying degrees of involvement in rule-breaking, deliberate foul-ups on labor details, and minor sabatage. Sit-down strikes for more food, threats to write protest letters to Washington, D.C. (a move which seemed to frighten Japanese officials), and detailed contingency plans for armed revolt were all part of resistance. So were the Americans' professed inability to learn Japanese close-order drill and prisoners' refusal to meet work quotas. The Americans were not model prisoners.73

A rough democracy, however, existed between the prisoners themselves. Although the complement of officers and senior NCOs remained fixed, enlisted prisoners, in Tanagawa camp at least, elected their own small-unit and barracks leaders. Here, as in the Philippines, army bureaucracy helped the prisoners feel more like soldiers than slaves. Equally important were actions by the prisoners. Breaking the unwritten rules against stealing from another prisoner or those prohibiting informing on another POW brought retaliation from the majority. Violators of the informal code of conduct received rough treatment: intimidation or beatings.

Also, interdependence and cooperation continued to aid the prisoners in Japan. "Combines" of two or squads of several POWs formed. Each man took measures to ensure the other's survival, sharing food, clothes, and emotional support. In an example of a common POW tactic, French and Lawson, on their voyage to Japan, confronted a Harrodsburg man who had quit eating the terrible rations. They cursed and criticized him until his anger motivated him into eating again. The man lived."

Yet life was hard for the prisoners in Japan. At Fukuoka

"Kerr, Surrender *and Survival,* 257; Lawson interview, NG, 10.

73French interview, UK; Bensing interview, UK; Gentry interview, UK; Gentry, "Bataan March, 4A" (videotape), 19 November 1985, Armor Training Center, Ft. Knox (hereafter [narrator's name], "Bataan March" [videotape]).

"French interview, UK; Brummett interview, UK, Hourigan interview, 29 May 1985, UK.

camp the sadistic guards, indifferent Japanese doctors, and inadequate housing prompted one POW to term the camp "the worst experience" of his war, with the possible exception of the Hell Ship voyage.75 Yet some Harrodsburg men experienced less brutality in Japan than in the Philippines. Others found more. Generally, prison life revolved around overcrowding, disease, food, overblown trivialities, and survival. Severe punishment for smoking at forbidden times, cigarettes sold for a dollar each, Red Cross packages sold for twenty dollars each, and "luxuries" such as a box of tea or a portion of hair tobacco loomed as large matters in the lives of the Harrodsburg men. More significant matters also affected the prisoners' lives. Hazards of all types endangered the prisoners. Most who survived prison camp bore long-lasting physical injuries. Some carried psychological scars.76

Although prisoners received little news from outside the camp, daily air raids and subtle changes in Japanese behavior signaled the approach of war's end. In Moji, where British and American POWs normally shared the work, Sims noticed that when the Americans had a battlefield success, the camp guards would select an all-American work party. Always an excuse was found to beat each prisoner on that detail. In the mines Anness's supervisor unexpectedly offered cigarette breaks. Finally, the Japanese drastically reduced the prisoners' rations. The usual half-canteen of vegetable vine soup became even more watery than usual. The prisoners knew their poor health heralded a questionable future. Vitamin deficiencies already had given them a variety of difficulties in addition to full-fledged diseases. Some of the relatively minor health problems included limited energy, loose skin, poor circulation, nongrowing hair, and nonbleeding cuts. Clearly, either the war would end or the prisoners, most now withered to a hundred pounds, would starve. No one could know which eventuality would happen first."

75OPMG, Report on American Prisoners of War Interned by the Japanese in Japan . . . Fukuoka main camp no. 1, in Sommers. The Japanese Story, 36.

76Anness interview, NG, 10-l 1; Martin interview, NG. 6; Hourigan interview, NG, 5-7; Reed interview, NG, 12. For the emotional stresses and injuries common to prisoners of ***war, see*** Henry Krystal, ***Massive Psychic Trauma (New*** York, 1968), and Elizabeth Head Vaughn, ***Communify Under Stress*** (Princeton, 1949).

"Lawson interview, NG, 11; Sims interview, UK; Anness interview, NG, 11; Bensing interview, UK; French interview, UK; Poweleit interview, UK.

In a mountain mine Yeast heard only the everyday rumble of excavating explosions in the shaft and the muffled noises of air raids outside. After work, prisoners who had been outdoors told him of an unusually loud explosion and a severe concussion. Near Hiroshima, French saw an enormous mushroom cloud. Near Nagasaki, Sadler heard a "roar" and saw "an awful toadstool across the bay."78 In many camps the Japanese abruptly cancelled work.

Yet not until their captors announced the war was over did the prisoners believe the long nightmare had ended. Suddenly, the prisoners began to control their own lives again. They painted "POW" and American flags on the roofs of buildings, scrounged for food, and organized their own security forces. In at least one camp they sought revenge on former guards. At Suruga, POWs held their own war crimes trials. Some former guards were executed.79

Soon American planes regularly flew over the camps and parachuted boxes of food, clothing, and medical supplies to the prisoners. Falling metal drums of supplies killed a few prisoners and civilians. The rich food also sickened many and killed a few of the prisoners, who were now unaccustomed to a normal American diet. While most POWs waited for U.S. forces, Hourigan, impatient to meet the Americans, traveled to his countrymen by train. Sadler and a determined group of POWs forced a reluctant Japanese boat captain to sail through a violent storm to reach U.S. forces at Yokohama. Lawson and others marched through Tokyo to reach their comrades.80

Before traveling back to the states, Hourigan, like many others, was flown to the Philippines. There he encountered a new type of military personnel.

> **[T]here went a lady with an overseas cap on. I asked [a] soldier, "What is that?" He said "That's a Wac." I said, 'What's a Wac?" And he said "We got women in the army." And I said, "The Japs told us that but I told them they was lying. . . ."81**

"Yeast interview, NG, 4; French interview, UK; Sadler interview, NG, 5.

79Peavler interview, NG, 4; Hourigan interview, NG, 7; French interview, UK.

80Kerr, *Surrender and Survival,* 284-85; Rue interview, NG, 8; Fowler interview, NG, 8; French interview, UK; Wilson interview, NG, 18; Reed interview, NG, 6; Bensing interview, UK; Hourigan interview, NG, 8; Sadler interview, NG, 6; Lawson interview, NG, 12.

"Hourigan interview, NG, 8.

Most of the Harrodsburg men soon went to the U.S. by ship. Reunions of hometown friends then took place. For example, Yeast, formerly in a mountain mining camp, sailed on the same ship with Sadler, once a worker in an undersea mine. After brief stops in military hospitals, all the survivors of Company D were promoted one rank, issued back pay, and discharged.82 Of the sixty-six who left Harrodsburg so long ago, thirty-seven returned. Some carried permanent physical injuries. Others bore severe emotional burdens. All carried hellish memories. But they were home.

IV

Inclement weather on November 11, 1984, prevented holding the acknowledgment ritual outdoors. The Harrodsburg National Guard armory, hastily prepared for an indoor program, housed a sizeable gathering of veterans, family members, and spectators. In some ways the group resembled a class reunion. Old men renewed acquaintances with former comrades. Old stories and photographs were exchanged and new snapshots taken. But when time came to begin the formalities, the crowd quieted and returned to their seats. Before them they saw, draped from ceiling to floor, the symbol of their pride and sorrow — a huge American flag. As soon as the ceremony began, the survivors of Company D would receive something decades overdue: official, individual recognition for bravery.83

About a year before this day, the U.S. Department of Defense had authorized the presentation of Bronze Stars to former participants in the 1941- 42 defense of the Philippines. Qualified Kentuckians, nevertheless, had demonstrated little enthusiasm for receiving medals. An army official charged with helping organize the presentation said, "There's been very little reaction from [Company D veterans]. I don't know if it's the hurt, the non-recognition, [or] the delay. [The ceremony organizers] haven't had much response."84

"Martin interview, NG, 7; Anness interview, NG, 12; Rue interview, NG, 9; Wilson interview, NG, 20.

"Andy Mead, "Veterans of Death March Finally Receive Decorations," Lexington ***Herald-Leader,*** 12 November 1984.

84Byron Crawford, "Bronze Stars Sparkle for Long Ago Valor," Louisville ***Courier-***

Part of the veterans' alleged reluctance to participate in public ceremonies might have originated in the intense pain of the war experience. The sudden loss of sixty-six young men (a large portion of Harrodsburg's 1940 military-age population) severely shocked the small town. Also the trauma of war, defeat, and prison dealt cruelly with close-knit Company D itself. Most members of the unit, which included many relatives, had been close for years. As veteran Everett Chumley put it, "Harrodsburg is such a small town. . . . We knew each other and we were good friends."85 Ties to others in the unit often aided an individual, but the deaths of many hometown friends could devastate.

Accordingly, some deny memories of the war and refuse to discuss it. Others have used work, family life, and a return to normal activities to help them forget. For some, however, the horror will not entirely fade. Unit veteran Edwin W. Rue, whose brother died on a Hell Ship, said, "I've tried to put it behind me. . . . But there are things you can't forget, things I sometimes can't get off my mind. It bothers me to bring it up. But remembering these things is important for future generations."86 In contrast, self-appointed "unit historian" Jack Wilson discussed the war often, filled his home with mementoes, scrapbooks, and photographs, and campaigned for a monument memorializing the unit.87

Journal, 12 November 1984; Jo Witt, "Veterans of Historic Ordeal to Receive Belated Honors," Danville ***Kentucky Advocate, 27*** May 1984.

"Scott Smith, "Mercer County Man Recounts Bataan Horror," Lexington ***Herald-Leader,*** 25 May 1981; Page, "Forty Years Ago," 32.

86Witt, "Veterans of Historic Ordeal"; John R. Cole, Jr., "Bataan: Four Recollections," Danville ***Kentucky Advocate Magazine,*** 11 June 1981; Brummett, "Bataan March" (videotape); Page, "Forty Years Ago," 36.

87Page, "Forty Years Ago"; Smith, "Mercer County Man"; Cole, "Four Recollections"; Greg Neikirk, "Wilson Featured in Book," Harrodsburg ***Herald,*** 18 October 1984. Wilson was not atone in his concern for memorials. Unsatisfied with the degree of recognition already accorded Company D and the rest of the 192nd, former battalion surgeon Dr. Alvin C. Poweleit still seeks recognition for the 192nd. In May 1988, a ceremony honoring Dr. Poweleit and 192nd veterans was held at Northern Kentucky University. Other memorials are more lasting. The Kentucky Military History Museum in Frankfort currently holds a small display on Company D. Also, a roadside memorial dedicated in Harrodsburg in 1%1 features a tank and a plaque listing the sixty-six local men in Company D. At Ft. Knox, on 16 September 1988, the newly created Prisoner of War Medal was presented to about one hundred ex-POWs, including some veterans of Company D.

For many unit survivors, war memories have taken less concrete form. For example, French had nightmares about combat and prison only for a brief time after he returned home. For others the legacies of war lasted much longer. The majority of Company D men, however, appear to have left the war behind. Familiar surroundings and activities eased the readjustment to civilian life. Yet, surely, for some veterans there are nights when, like Gentry, they wake from dreadful scenes of fighting a fanatic enemy.**

In addition to nightmares, physical problems affect many former prisoners of the Japanese at a significantly higher rate than the general population. "Premature aging," anxiety, heart disease, tuberculosis, chronic malaria, impaired sight and hearing, and neurological deficits are some of the maladies that have followed ex-prisoners into peacetime.89 Inevitably, health problems and time have thinned the ranks of Company D's survivors. At this writing, of the thirty-seven Harrodsburg men who returned from the war, eighteen still live.

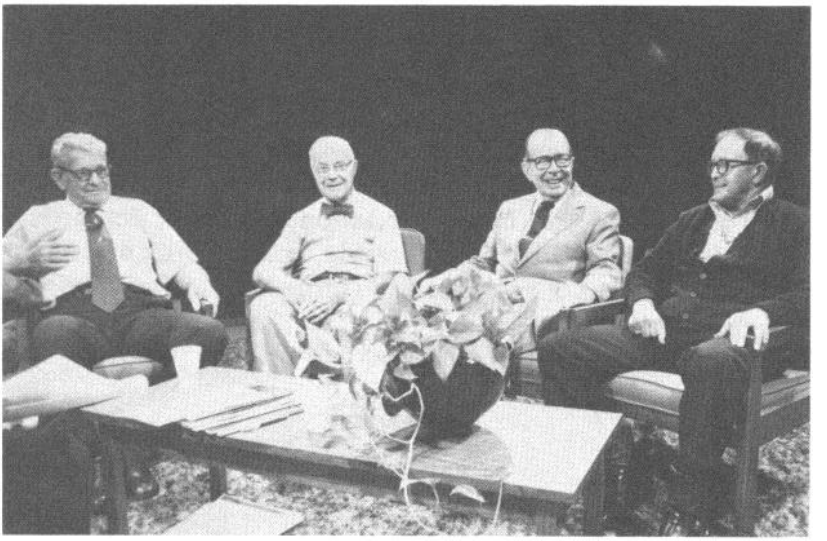
Understandably, some unit survivors carry bitterness toward the U.S. government, the army, or the Japanese. Some simply retain an unfocused anger. But on the day of the Bronze Star ceremony, these darker aspects of remembrance remained hidden. Despite the worries of ceremony organizers, a fairly large group of unit veterans (many of whom live near Harrodsburg) or their widows attended. Perhaps they felt a need to acknowledge the bonds to their old comrades or to their own individual pasts. For whatever reason, they came. Lt. Gen. Edmon Brown, Jr., the Pentagon's director of the army staff, delivered a patriotic speech and awarded twenty-nine Bronze Stars to Company D men and other veterans. Reportedly, most of the recipients were "surprised but happy" to have a meda1.90

More profound were the reflections of the Company D men who have been interviewed. A county deputy sheriff after the war, Hourigan asserted that his years as a prisoner taught him empathy for those he later jailed. The violent years in the Philip-

"Gentry and French, "Bataan March" (videotape); Neikirk, "Wilson Featured"; Reed interview, UK; Sims interview, UK; Collier interview, UK.

89Sommers, Japanese Story. 66. 70.

90Mead, "Veterans of Death March"; "Heroes Receive Bronze Stars," Harrodsburg *Herald.* 15 November 1984; Crawford, "Bronze Stars."



Survivors relax at a 1985 gathering at Ft. Knox. Pictured (l. to *r.):* William H. Gentry, Dr. Alvin C. Poweleit, Grover C. Brummett, Morgan French. Courtesy of Bill McMichael, *The Turret.*

pines taught Gentry lessons in humility. "[You] had to accept a lot of things you didn't want to," he commented. Eventually, Gentry came to take without protest "what was dealt out to [me]." Poweleit brought from the war an appreciation of patience. French and Brummett concurred as to the efficacy of a positive attitude in aiding their survival. Sims attributed his survival to faith in God and country. All shared a determination to survive. Like many POWs these men also recalled how prisoners went to almost any extreme to keep each other alive. Anness summed up the bond between the prisoners:

> [We] learned a lot in prison camp about human nature, how to get along with people, how to share what little food you have with your buddies or to save one of your buddies' life or do all you can for your buddy in a place like this."

Some of Company D refused to attempt escape when presented an opportunity to do so. Each believed he had to stay with his

91Hourigan interview, 29 May 1985, UK; Gentry, "Bataan March" (videotape); Poweleit interview, UK; French interview, UK; Brummett interview, UK; Sims interview, UK; Anness interview, NG, 13.

comrades for reasons which superseded his own liberty: to prevent retribution against those left behind, to offer what aid was possible, or to maintain the bond between "buddies."

As citizen-soldiers in the state guard, as tankers in battle, and as aging survivors of a distant war, the Harrodsburg men have stood — in each incarnation — as a community. Fate denied them a conventional role in their nation's triumph. Yet through all their struggles, they fought bravely, endured with determination, and retained their humanity. Throughout history men have fought and died for less.

Appendix I

Roster of Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion (Ranks as of Oct. - Nov. 1941)

NATIONAL GUARD

		From Harrodsburg	Died in War	Survived War
OFFICERS				
1st. Lt.	Rue, Edwin W.	*		*
	Vanarsdale, George A.	*		
2nd Lt.	Lafon, Harry R., Jr.		***9-7-44*** ***Shinyo Maru***	
	Rue, Arch B.	*	***12-15-44*** ***Oryoku Maru***	
	Preston, Everett R.		***2-45*** Camp Fukuoka-17	
	Gentry, William H.1	*		*
ENLISTED MEN				
1st Sgt.	Terhune, Yandell	*	***7-12-42*** Camp Cabanatuan	
s/sgt.	Anness, Joseph R.	*		(d. 7-l-76)
	Brummett, Grover C.'	*		*
	Collier, Morris S.	*		*
	Denny, Wallace	*	***7-22-42*** Camp Cabanatuan	
	Hourigan, Kenneth M.	*		*
	Quinn, Charles R.	*		*
	Moore, Albert B.1	*		*
	Sampson, Earnest L.1	*		
	Wilson, Maurice E.	*		(d. 5-2-85)
SGT	Alford, William C.'	*		*
	Bottoms, Johnnie1	*	***6-1-42*** Palawan	
	Crick, Ancel E.1	*	10-24-44 ***Arisan Maru***	
	Devine, Ben B.	•	***12-44*** Cabanatuan	
	Foster, Willard E.'	*	***6-2-42*** Camp O'Donnell	
	French, Edward	*	***4-20-42*** Bataan	

NATIONAL GUARD

		From Harrodsburg	Died in War	Survived War
ENLISTED MEN (cont.)				
	French, Morgan	*		*
	Harlow, Lyle C.1	*		(d. 5-12-84)
	Lawson, Marcus A.	*		*
	Million, Joseph B.	*	12-14-44 Palawan	
	Peavler, William'	*		(d. 3-21-78)
	Reed, Field M., Jr.1	*		
	Sadler, John E.	*		(d. 9-3-68)
	Sallee, Haze F.	*	1944 Japan	
	Sallee, James W.'	*	10-24-44 ***Arisan Maru***	
	Scanlon, Jennings B.1	*	7-8-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Sims, Cecil1	*		
	Simpson, Judson D.	*		(d. 1 l-l9-80)
	Steel, Herbert C.	*	6- 14-42 Camp O'Donnell	
	Taylor, Marvin D.1	*		(d. 8-27-47)
	Vandiver, Cecil A.1	*		
	Yankee, Lucien F.1	*		(d. 5-28-67)
Cpl.	Dean, Oscar	*	l0-l0-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Yeast, Claude L.			(d. 1 l-20-67)
Pfc.	Chumly, George E.	*		(d. 5-12-88)
	Cummins, John L.1	*	**10-24-44** ***Arisan Maru***	
	Fowler, Earl W.	*		*
	Hungate, Wesley D.	*	5-12-42 Camp O'Donnell	
	Keeling, Berchell	*	7-l-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Reed, Charles E.	*		(d. 8-1 l-67)
	Royalty, Garret G.	*		(d. l-5-85)
	Stine, Ralph	*		*
Pvt.	Anness, Elzie1	*	l-6-43 Camp Tanagawa	
	Blackwater,Wm. E.1	*		*
	Bussell, Vernon H.	*	10-24-44 ***Arisan Maru***	
	Cloyd, Robert V.1	*	10-24-44 ***Arisan Maru***	

NATIONAL GUARD

	From Harrodsburg	Died in War	survived War
ENLISTED MEN (cont.)			
Durr, James W.1	*		(d. 1 l-25-72)
Goodpaster, Roy E.	*	2-45 Moji, Japan	
Gray, Lonnie L.	*		(d. 4-10-87)
Kyler, Stanley H.1	*		*
Leonard, Fred'	*	***7-28-42*** Camp Cabanatuan	
Leonard, Hugh V.	*	***9-7-44*** ***Shinyo Maru***	
Martin, Lawrence I.	*		
Sadler, Campbell K.1	*		(d. 10-12-72)
Shewmaker, Reid	*		(d. 9-l-83)
Sparrow, Wm. D.	*		(d. 5-5-52)
Trisler, Edward V.	*	12-23-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
Whittinghill, Grover D!	*		(d. 6-7-80)
Wills, Edward G.1	*	7-3-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
Yeast. Willard R.1	*	12-14-44 Palawan	

SELECTIVE SERVICE*

		From Kentucky	Died in war	Survived War
Sgt.	Hopper, Aaron Clyde	*		*
Cpl.	Bensing, Elmer J., Jr.	*		*
	Funk, John A.		4-42 Bataan	
	Graham, Raymond A.	*	7-2-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
Pfc.	Boden, Eber L.		1 l-22-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Cunningham, John 0.	*	10-23-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Tschudi, Peter H.	*		(d. n.d.)
Pvt.	Adams, Wm. E.	*		(d. n.d.)
	Aguero, Eduardo P.	*		
	Aldred, John D.	*		(d. 5-13-85)
	Allen, Clarence L.		1 l-2942 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Arnold, Wm. L.			*
	Babb, John B.		10-24-44 *Arisan Maru*	
	Boone, Patrick	*		*
	Boyce, George H.	*	10-24-44 *Arisan Maru*	
	Brooks, Robert S.	*	12-8-41 Clark Field	
	Brooks, Thomas F.	*	12-10-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
	Bruce, Tansell E.	*		
	Carter, James M.			
	Cosmo, Ross			
	Choate, Charles		12-14-44 Palawan	
	Choate, James L.			
	Christopher, George A.			
	Coy, Sidney A.	*		*
	Cravens, Maynard			
	Cravens, Woodrow W.			
	Darnall, David R.			
	Dietrich, George B.			(d. 10-19-85)
	Ferguson, Everett E.	*	6-9-42 Camp O'Donnell	
	Ferguson, Harold J.			
	Garcia, Earnest		4-42 Corregidor	

SELECTIVE SERVICE

	From Kentucky	Dii in War	Survived War
ENLISTED MEN (cont.)			
Grover, James T.			
Henry, Jacob	*	7-l-42 Camp Cabanatuan	
Hickey, Thomas P.	*	5-12-42 Camp O'Donnell	
Holman, George			
Hortter, Erwin D.			
Humphrey, A.L., Jr.			
Jardot, William H.	*	10-24-44 ***Arisan Maru***	
Jones, James E.	*	***S-28-42*** Camp O'Donnell	
Johnson, Otha			
Lamb, Richard T.			
Lewis, Willis E.			
Likens, Claude	*		*
Lofton, Woodrow P.		***7-3-42*** Camp Cabanatuan	
Logan, George W.			
McDow, Everett A.			
McGrath, Martin W.			
Marksbury, Marvin			
Nii, L. T., Jr.		1442 Guagua	
Nugent , Daniel	*		*
Odom, Lawrence	*		*
Rose, Willard	*		*
Scarlett, James C.			
Serpell, Edward P.	*		(d. 11-14-S)
Smith, John C.	*		(d. 1983)
Thompson, James C.	*		*
Traburt, Howard R.			
Leake, Thomas*	*		(d. 1983)

REGULAR ARMY'

Pvt.	Anderson, Crate		
	Craven, Isaac N.		
	Jeffries, Ira L.		
	Kent, William C.	***6-25-42*** Camp O'Donnell	

‘Battalion Headquarters
*Complete origin and disposition information unavailable

SOURCES: Payroll of Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion, 1 October - 20 November 1941 (photocopy), National Personnel Records Center; Capt. Elmer E. Long, Jr., American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, to author, 1 June 1986, 16 May 1987; CW4 Edwin G. Birdwhistell, Officer of Personnel Readiness, Kentucky National Guard (roster by Maurice Wilson), to author, 9 September 1985; Elmer J. Bensing, Jr. (roster by Bensing and Grover C. Brummett) to author, 29 November 1985; Morgan French to author, n.d., 1985; Gentry Collection (Roster of Headquarters Company, 192nd Tank Battalion); Reed interview, UK; Simms interview, UK; Ralph Stine interview, 1 April 1988, UK.

Appendix II

Total unit personnel:	128	
National Guard (Harrodsburg):	66	
Selective Service:	58	
Regular Army:	4	
Died in combat or prison:	47	(36.7%)

Distribution of Deaths (National Guard)

Place/Cause **of Death**	N	%
Combat	1	3.4
Death March	0	0.0
Camp O'Donnell	3	10.3
Palawan Prison Camp	1	3.4
Camp Cabanatuan	10	34.5
Hell Ships	8	27.6
Camps in Japan	4	13.8
Palawan Massacre	2	6.9
Total Dead of 66 National Guard	29 (43.9%)	

Distribution of Deaths (Selective Service)*

Combat	4	22.2
Death March	0	0.0
Camp O'Donnell	3	16.7
Camp Cabanatuan	7	38.9
Hell Ships	3	16.7
Camps in Japan	0	0.0
Palawan Massacre	1	5.6
Total Dead of 58 Selective Service	18 (29.3%)	

*Complete disposition information unavailable.